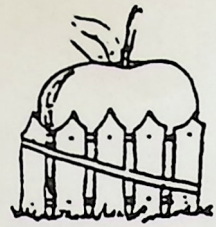




Applegate Valley Historical Society
15050 Hwy 238
CPO Box 3122
Applegate, Oregon 97530



JANUARY 2000 NEWSLETTER

WAY BACK WHEN

Back in the days when we were responsible for our own entertainment (or for the entertainment of others) we participated in Donkey basketball – the men and women alike. I do not know exactly how this came about because I was never in on the business workings of these games.

As far as I knew the donkeys were brought in by truck by a manager who was a cut above a guy he hired called a “hazer.” The truck, I think, was their home. The donkeys were mostly medium-sized, flea-bitten, scroungy-looking things. They were definitely not over-blessed with brains. They would come into our valley and set up game nights in two or three communities. By the time they’d played two games a night (men’s and women’s) in these communities they could start over for a second go-around and still expect a reasonably good attendance. Most serious wounds would be healed by the second time around.

For years Applegate had a men’s “town team” who played – Williams, Provolt, Jacksonville, Murphy, etc. The women’s team was mostly wives of the town team players. A gullible lot we were, if you considered the hazards. It seemed pretty easy as we watched the men – none of us considered their stature vs. ours on the same size donkey for example.

As they say – we were about to learn a thing or two. Think about it. You’ve lucked out by getting the smallest donkey of the bunch. Then it occurs to you when the “hazer” hands you a rope – this cute little donkey has no controlling bit in his mouth. Why had this not been evident early on? This game has very few rules. The “hazer,” you learn immediately, “calls the shots.”

So the ladies all got aboard their respective donkeys as best they could. This may not seem too difficult at first glance – the team against team is a farce. How many of us have recently just up and jumped on a bareback horse standing still? Much less a donkey being slapped on his rear with a four-inch wide strap. We needed some coaching, but our coach had never played Donkey basketball either. I’ll tell you now so that you can avoid the main hazard – never make eye contact with the “hazer” with one of your “you dirty little so and so” looks, for that will be your undoing.

The best thing to do is keep the ball airborne at all risks, for when it hits the floor someone has to get off their donkey and get it. The trick then is to get on the donkey with a huge rope in one hand and a basketball under your arm. This is not easy. However, I did manage it. I was just beginning to congratulate myself when the “hazer” laid his strap on my donkey’s rear and sent him airborne, and I almost sailed right on over his ears into the maze of donkey feet cluttering the floor ahead of me. I concentrated my “you dirty little so and so” look to the feet on the floor and nearly burned a hole therein.

Gathering my resources, checking my muscle structure and telling my pulse to slow down, I heaved the ball to a teammate as far from the “hazer” as I could.

Thanking my lucky stars that the donkeys only came through the valley now and again, I reminded myself that there must be an easier way to earn funds we were just going to give away. I looked between my donkey’s ears and away from the action. That floor was a lot harder, and my bones were not as young as they once were. I decided then and there that I did not want that life for a profession. And here came that stupid little so and so of a “hazer” – gotta try and keep out of his way.

M.K. Applegatia (541) 846-6544



Applegate Valley Historical Society
15050 Hwy 238
CPO Box 3122
Applegate, Oregon 97530



JANUARY 2000 NEWSLETTER

Hope this finds everyone Healthy and doing ok in the New Millennium.
I also hope that everyone had a Happy Holiday Season.

There is not much going on at the Museum at this time, as we are
closed for the Winter. There has been some flower bulbs planted.

We are planning on putting down the sod in early Spring.

Our next meeting will be Sat. Jan. 15, 2000 at 10:30am. at the
Museum. Please bring your chair.

This years Officers and Board are as follows:

President: Bill Dunlap Vice President: Isabel Goode

Secretary/Treasurer: Barbara Niedermeyer Historian: Myrtle Krouse

Board Members: John Black, Steve Decker, Cathy Dunlap.

Hope to see you at the meeting on Sat. Jan. 15, at 10:30am.

Don't forget to bring your chair.

A.V.H.S. Sec/Tre.

Barbara Niedermeyer